

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
VOTING SESSION AND WORK SESSION**

**Wednesday, April 14, 2021  
Minutes**

*Minutes adopted September 8, 2021*

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Mayor Stewart, Councilmember Kovar, Councilmember Dyballa, Councilmember Kostiuk, Councilmember Seamens, Councilmember Smith, Councilmember Searcy

**Also Present:** City Manager Ludlow, City Clerk Carpenter

The City Council convened at 7:30 PM via Zoom.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE**

Mayor Stewart began the session by acknowledging the fatal shootings of Dominique Williams and James Lionel Johnson by an off-duty Pentagon police officer in a Takoma Park parking lot the morning of April 7, 2021.

City Manager Ludlow updated the Council on the case (attached)

Mayor Stewart updated the Council on future agenda items.

**UPDATE FROM THE YOUTH COUNCIL**

Youth Council Representative Julia Maynard provided the City Council with updates. The Youth Council has met with members of the Red Cross to discuss youth initiatives and their importance in the time of COVID-19.

Ms. Maynard added that some Youth Council members also attended the National League of Cities Conference and met with City Manager Ludlow.

Members of the Youth Council described the experiences as “eye opening”.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**1. Public Hearing on Recommended FY 2022 Budget**

Arthur David Olson expressed concerns over the Takoma property tax bill which contains a tax rate of 55 cents compared to the current rate of 52.95 cents. Olson declared that increasing tax rates faster than individuals' ability to pay is unsustainable.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Paul Huebner expressed safety concerns over Takoma Junction lay-by and how Council members are handling the project.
- Katherine Rurka, business owner, questioned how the Takoma Junction is going to impact parking and small businesses overall.
- David Navari voiced concerns over tax increases during COVID-19.
- Matthew Ling asked for external review regarding the high-profile police case involving Pentagon police officer David Hall Dixon.
- Mary Jane Muchui commented on developers attempting to buy her home and expressed concern over the lack of involvement of the disabled community on the Junction project.
- Carter Dougherty commented on the Takoma Park shooting and expressed support for the Takoma Junction plan.
- Abigail Conrad expressed concern over police officer David Hall Dixon and the two cases he was involved in.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Councilmember Seamens commented on recent acts of police violence in the community and expressed appreciation towards residents who wanted to discuss these issues. He also acknowledged the hiring of Police Chief DeVaul in helping these efforts.

Councilmember Searcy commented on meetings attended and called for moment of silence for Dominique Williams and James Lionel Johnson.

Councilmember Dyballa commented in support of comments made by Councilmember Seamens and Councilmember Searcy regarding the recent police shooting. She commented on upcoming meetings.

Councilmember Smith thanked the Deputy City Manager, Safeway, Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, and Washington Adventist University for leading a pop-up COVID-19 vaccination site.

Councilmember Kovar commented on recent police shooting as well as meetings attended.

Mayor Stewart commented positively on COVID-19 vaccination efforts. As part of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), Mayor Stewart has been named chair of a task force intended to develop regional racial equity training for locally elected officials.

### **CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

City Manager Ludlow's comments are attached.

## **WORK SESSION**

### **2. Continued Discussion of Committees**

Councilmember Searcy, Councilmember Dyballa and Councilmember Kostiuk presented on the purpose of committees as well as the revised factors for prioritizing the need for standing committees and provided recommendations regarding the City's current eight quasi-judicial committees (presentation attached).

Councilmember Searcy highlighted the need to review the roles of three Boards (Personnel Appeal Board, Facade Advisory Board, and Noise Control Board) and provided specific recommendations for each.

Councilmember Dyballa stated that the regulatory element of the Facade Advisory Board was proposed to be discontinued.

The City Manager clarified the role of the Police Pension Board for the public.

Councilmember Kovar commented on the importance of having committees comprised of members of different backgrounds (tenants, landlords, etc.)

## **ADJOURN**

The City Council adjourned for the evening at approximately 10:10 p.m.